

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please cancel claim 9 without prejudice or disclaimer.

1. (Currently amended) [A]]Pre-expanded foam particles formed from a moldable crystalline aromatic polyester resin~~pre-expanded foam particles~~, said particles having a bulk density in the range of from 0.01 to 1.0 g/cm³, crystallinity in the range of from 1 to 8% and a crystallization peak temperature in the range of from 130 to 180°C, wherein the resin contains at least one moiety of a moiety derived from isophthalic acid or a moiety derived from 1,4-cyclohexanedimethanol in a total amount ranging from 0.5 to 10% by weight of the crystalline aromatic polyester resin.

2. (Canceled).

3. (previously presented) The pre-expanded foam particles of claim 1, further comprising a polytetrafluoroethylene resin in an amount ranging from 0.005 to 0.1 parts by weight based on 100 parts by weight of the crystalline aromatic polyester resin.

4. (previously presented) The pre-expanded foam particles of claim 1, obtainable by cutting a foamed extrudate.

5. (previously presented) The pre-expanded foam particles of claim 4, having a generally cylindrical shape, and a predetermined length, the foamed extrudate having a strand shape.

6. (previously presented) The pre-expanded foam particles of claim 5, wherein the melt tension of the crystalline aromatic polyester resin is in the range of from 0.7 to 3.0 g in the presence of a melt tension modifier when measured at 270°C.

7. (previously presented) The pre-expanded foam particles of claim 6, wherein an open cell ratio is in the range of from 5 to 35%.

8. (previously presented) The pre-expanded foam particles of claim 4, having the bulk density adjusted by impregnating the pre-expanded foam particles with a gas under pressure at least once and re-expanding the pre-expanded foam particles prior to molding.

9. (canceled)

10. (previously presented) A molded foam article, obtainable by filling, a mold cavity formed by closing male and female mold members of a mold with the pre-expanded foam particles of claim 1, and heating to further expand and fuse the pre-expanded foam particles in the mold cavity.

11. (previously presented) The molded foam article of claim 10, having an apparent density in the range of from 0.01 to 1.0 g/cm³ and a fusion ratio not less than 40%.

12. (previously presented) A laminated molded foam article, comprising the molded foam article of claim 10 laminated with a film or sheet of an aromatic polyester resin.

13. (previously presented) The laminated article of claim 12, wherein a peel strength of the film or sheet from the molded foam article is not less than 5 N/23 mm.

14. (previously presented) The laminated article of claim 12, produced by placing the film or sheet at least in a male mold member and/or a in a female mold member of a mold, closing the male and female mold members, filling the mold cavity with the crystalline aromatic polyester resin pre-expanded foam particles of claim 1 and heating, thereby molding said crystalline aromatic polyester resin pre-expanded foam particles and laminating said crystalline aromatic polyester resin pre-expanded foam particles with said aromatic polyester resin in one step.

15. (previously presented) The pre-expanded foam particles of claim 2, further comprising a polytetrafluoroethylene resin in an amount ranging from 0.005 to 0.1 parts by weight based on 100 parts by weight of the pre-expanded foam particles, wherein the pre-expanded foam particles are obtained by cutting a strand shaped foamed extrudate into generally cylindrical shapes.

16. (previously presented) The pre-expanded foam particles of claim 15, wherein the melt tension of the crystalline aromatic polyester resin is in the range of from 0.7 to 3.0 g in the presence of a melt tension modifier when measured at 270°C, and the open cell ratio is in the range of from 5 to 35%.

17. (previously presented) The pre-expanded foam particles of claim 16, having a bulk density adjusted by pressure at least once and re-expanding the pre-expanded foam particles prior to molding and a crystallinity in the range of from 1 to 8%.

18. (previously presented) A molded foam article, obtainable by filling, a mold cavity formed by closing male and female mold members of a mold with the pre-expanded foam particles of claim 17, and heating to further expand and fuse the pre-expanded foam particles in the mold cavity.

19. (previously presented) The molded foam article of claim 18, having an apparent density in the range of from 0.01 to 1.0 g/cm³ and a fusion ratio not less than 40%.

20. (previously presented) The article of claim 13 produced by placing a film or sheet at least in a male mold member and/or in a female mold member of a mold, closing the male and female mold members, filling the mold cavity with the crystalline aromatic polyester resin pre-expanded foam particles of claim 1 and heating, thereby molding and laminating in one step.